सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

"There is no Religion higher than Truth"

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A FEW THOUGHTS ON "LIGHT ON THE PATH"

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PERHAPS of all Theosophical, devotional books, *Light on the Path* is pre-eminently the book for those who suffer in their emotional life, and yet know that they ought not to be thus suffering. Few can have turned to it in time of stress and not found it of energizing comfort.

It consists of Rules, written, it is said, "for all disciples"; and disciples are forged by the suffering and sorrow which they undergo, either in their attempts to fit themselves for the great Task, or through the reactions of their environment upon them. To such, the psychological help given in this book is priceless.

We are given the keynote of the whole book right at the outset, and if attention is not paid to it, the value of the book is lost. Yet it is so simple that it is often read and passed by. Speaking of the Rules it says: "*Attend you to them.*" These rules are for all disciples, at whatever stage they may be, ignorant and foolish, or grand and noble; therefore *we* must attend to them.

The attitude of the mind or consciousness when fully aware and awake is one of attention; it implies that the mind is directed to a certain thing or subject, that it is careful in recording the impressions received, that it is held on the subject with concentration and contemplation until it is as thoroughly understood as possible. More time is wasted by inattention than is generally realized, for it

is lack of attention to what is said or written or done that makes for misstatements, misunderstandings and loss of opportunities.

Through inattention, hints that might have made a great difference to oneself or to others are not seen as hints: thus opportunities which the hint, if taken, would have opened up, are lost.

It is in hints that we receive our guidance; orders cannot be given at our stage. Also, the value of a deed done to order accrues to the one who orders it; but when hints are followed, the results accrue to the doer of the action, not to the one who hints. The workings of Karma are exact and intricate!

In the second paragraph, we find the kind of character which is necessary as a starting-point. This is the first necessity, the background to what follows, though most of us ignore it and start right away with the Rules, wondering why they are so difficult to follow. That paragraph reads:

> Before the eyes can see, they must be incapable of tears. Before the ear can hear, it must have lost its sensitiveness. Before the voice can speak in the presence of the Masters it must have lost the power to wound. Before the soul can stand in the presence of the Masters its feet must be washed in the blood of the heart.

Character may be said to be the relationship between the soul and the lower man. The latter, comprising the soul's vehicles or means of expression, is that which is loosely called the personality, but which students ought rather to think of as an instrument made up of certain characteristics.

The main avenues for the gathering of experience by the soul when in a body are the eyes and the ears, while for outgoing expression the chief avenues are the voice and the passions and desires. Before any of these can be fully used by the soul, they must have become pure instruments for *its* use, not for that of the personal man. The whole personality has to become such that the painful experiences of life and the longing for progress (an intolerable strain at times) cause no self-pity, which blinds the eyes and renders the ears deaf to all sounds save the cry of the personal self.

Self-pity is a fatal emotion, warping the whole nature. Even the exquisite anguish suffered by the soul in its endeavour to break through to union with the ALL must not be allowed to obscure the vision which it has caught, or to make the personality draw back into the "carapace of selfhood."

These four unnumbered Rules in *Light on the Path* must be attended to *now*, while life is not too difficult; for long before the end of the Path, both personality and soul will pass through greater anguish than we can now conceive of, as thread after thread that binds both to earth-life is broken.

Though it is said that the tears that flow at the sight of others' pain are "the streams that irrigate the fields of charity immortal" (*The Voice of the Silence*, p. 14), yet, before the eye can be a true servant of the soul, it must be trained so as not to be blinded by tears of compassion or of self-pity.

To train the ear to lose its sensitivity is even more difficult, for it is through the ear that a hurt to one's self-esteem can be most easily received. A spoken word will often wound more deeply than a look.

To train both eye and ear, the disciple must learn that all real harm comes to him from within, and that the real admonisher also is within. He suffers because of his reactions to outer admonishers; but, by attention to them with dispassion, and by attention also to his inner perception, he can change his character.

How shall the ear be rendered insensitive, *i.e.*, incapable of carrying messages to the personal, emotional self? Must we become deaf to Humanity's Great Cry? No one who has lost the capacity to feel personally hurt by what is said to or of him by others, can be insensitive to the suffering of his fellows, unless he has dammed in himself all sympathy and become as hard as iron instead of as flexible as steel. It is only when the ear has become insensitive to personal hurts that it *can* register the greater cry.

The real purpose of the ears and eyes is to make contact between the soul and the world. The purpose of the soul is not emotion, good or bad; it is understanding, the result of sympathy or compassion, which show themselves in sacrificial action.

It is interesting to note that we can communicate with others by the language of the eyes, but through the ears we can only receive from others. The eyes take in and give out; the ears only take in. We can show anger, love, amazement, incredulity and fear with the eyes, but we can only listen with the ears. The value of the power to listen is brought out in the second portion of the Rules, but here we refer to the necessity of attention in listening.

Having thus dealt with the two methods of taking in, we must turn to the best mode of expression that we have, the voice. The voice is sound, the distinguishing characteristic of *Akasa*, and, like the latter, can heal in its highest aspect and wound or destroy in its lowest. Sound is creative or destructive and, before we can be trusted with spiritual things (can "speak in the presence of the Masters," which implies being ready to receive special training), the voice must be completely under control and have become the voice of the soul itself.

The voice that wounds represents the emotional nature which, in order to retain its sense of separateness and self-importance, shows its power to hurt another. This is a psychological fact, as we can see, for how often do we find that, when we have been wounded in our self-esteem, we try to recover that self-esteem by wounding another! This effort lies at the basis of such phrases as, "I told you so!" which we find repeated *ad nauseam* by one trying to re-establish his feeling of self-importance.

Indeed, no one who speaks for the wounding of another can be trusted to carry on the work of the great Lovers of Humanity. Nay, further, no one whose voice is *capable* of expressing the slightest hint of unkindness in thought or feeling, can be of highest service in the world; for such sounds are of the lower astral light, and the voice needed is the one that can echo the sounds from the *Akasic* heights for the healing of the nations. One does not give dynamite and matches to a child, nor will the Great Ones allow Their Power to pass into the hands of one who can harm another.

The last sentence in the paragraph quoted refers to that aspect of ourselves which uses the senses, *i.e.*, the budding disciple. Before he can stand in the presence of the Masters he must have won

through to that true humility which is the reward for the destruction of all personal wishes, personal desires and self-esteem.

Standing is a wonderful symbol; it not only refers to man with his head in heaven and his feet on earth, but also to the forces of nature which course through him as he so stands, poised between heaven and earth. To "stand in the presence of the Masters" implies the meeting of peers, even though one may have achieved the goal and the other be but at the beginning of the way. It implies fearlessness. It also implies utter abandonment of the lower self, whereas prostration of the body parallel to the earth, even at the feet of the Great Ones, implies the recognition of one's own unworthiness even while showing the reverence due to Them. Necessary as such obeisance is, almost the whole length of the Path, it will not take one to the last step.

This upright poise has nothing at all in common with the pride of self which makes it difficult to bend the physical or mental knee to the Great Ones. The difference is not in degree, but entirely one of kind. To be able to stand, to remain on one's feet in the great Presence, implies the giving up of oneself utterly to the Teacher, the taking of oneself to Him, and saying, "I am ready! I have come!"

Self-mastery and humility make this possible; and, though we turn from that Presence, sent out on our errand of mercy and of further struggle, yet the consciousness of that bond of acceptance will remain. It is now companionship, not servitude, companionship with the Great and also with the small, with the Saint and with the sinner. It is the beginning in the disciple of that power which, in its culmination, will enable him to turn his back on the glory of the Goal in order that Its light may pour through him onto the world he faces. Having withstood the world and his own personality, he gains the power to withstand the whole force of Spirit which seeks to clasp him to Its bosom so that he shall lose himself in IT. Only superhuman power and poise will then enable him still to stand upright and to direct the flow of that Great Power through himself to the world of men. This stage, however, is for the disciple far in the distance, and, before it can be reached, he must be able to follow the Rules laid down for the first stages of the Path.

The Rules which follow the four unnumbered ones are numbered. The first 20 fall into five groups, the *fourth* Rule in each group showing the way to the fulfilment of the others. In the 21st, we have an indication as to when we may look for the flower of the soul to open.

Each *fourth* Rule deals with the soul or the heart; the heart standing here for the emotional basis of the separated self. In its sense of separateness lies the source of evil, that which makes us ambitious, which makes us long for life—and for a comfortable life at that! Our desires have to be turned over to the mind for evaluation, for then only can we realize that neither the present nor the future is important, because they are non-permanent; that the only reality is the Eternal.

The snags in the way of recognizing eternal thought are: the tendency to think ourselves separate from all others, the clinging to sensation to which we have been accustomed, and the personal desire for growth. From all these tendencies we can learn, while we remain unaffected by them.

The fourth Rule of the second group, Rule No. 8, includes what is really a *mantram*:

> Yet stand alone and isolated, because nothing that is embodied, nothing that is conscious of separation, nothing that is out of the eternal, can aid you.

To learn this will give us self-knowledge; our growth will come, though it must not be looked for, and we must press forward to open our soul to the eternal, for *none can do it for us.*

The twelfth Rule tells us: "*within you is the light of the world.*" How easy it is to say this and to accept it on logical grounds; how difficult to remain constantly conscious of it in all its ramifications! How can one grasp the light of the world for oneself? We shall enter the light, but we can never touch the flame.

The fourth Rule of the next group, Rule 16, tells us to hunger for possessions, such possessions as can be shared by all; and also that the peace which must be sought "is that sacred peace which nothing can disturb, and in which the soul grows as does the holy flower

upon the still lagoons."

Though having possessions, we must appear to others as nothing. The power, peace and stillness of the inner life must show in the peace that flows from knowledge. We know what we have accomplished; we know what we are. We have no need of boasting, for we know ourselves and therefore are at peace. Further progress is inner and therefore we "appear as nothing in the eyes of men."

Rule 20 shows the breadth of vision that we must gain. As the *Gita* tells us, it is not by any particular ideology that we can reach the goal; many roads can lead to it. Therefore when an individual puts into operation the Third Fundamental Proposition, *i.e.*, adopts self-induced and self-devised ways and means on the Path, he "is to himself absolutely the way, the truth, and the life." He has at last separated Himself from the lower self; far from thinking the lower man to be "nothing" or an "enemy," he has realized that it is something which he has built, with pain and trouble, for his use. Having realized this, he must search the depths of his own inner soul. And, deeper still, he must turn toward that great Star which shines even beyond his soul. The slight glimmering of this Star shows him his goal, and he must struggle on till the light becomes the Infinite Light.

This stage will not come slowly and in peace, but through life's battles. As the bud struggles to open, or the bird to force its way through the shell, so does the soul force its way through the entanglements of its chrysalis, the personality; but, when it is free, the turmoil dies down and a great peace descends. The flower of the soul has opened. In the utter calm of emotions stilled, the utter peace from mental chatter, with the body in complete submission to the soul, there comes the silence which fills all with peace and strength.

Whether this state lasts but for a moment of time or for a thousand years, the memory of it will not fade, for a real change has taken place. The disciple can never again be as he was before.

THE OCCULT SIDE OF NATURE

NATURE has a hidden side, and the scientific sutdy of that hidden side is called Occultism. An Occultist is one who adopts scientific methods to understand the invisible aspects of Nature. But, unlike the ordinary scientist who analyses matter in a retort or a test-tube, and observes through a microscope or a telescope, the Occultist uses his own powers, his own inner intuitive capacities, which he has developed to the full. He is not dependent on outer agencies for gathering knowledge.

Thus, Occultism, the science of the invisible, is founded upon one great principle: Within the visible universe, there is the invisible universe; within our visible body, is hidden our invisible body; within the visible sun, moon, stars, the whole firmament, there is the invisible counterpart to each; within every visible object, in fact, there is the invisible aspect. The study of this invisible within the visible is the foundation of the science of Occultism. Its natural corollary is that the Occultist uses his invisible or inner senses and organs to examine the phenomenal, invisible universe, while the ordinary scientist uses his visible senses.

The Occultist goes deeper and finds out that beyond, behind and within the invisible universe there is still another—the universe of Spirit, of Omniscience, of illimitable Intelligence. He learns that he has not only an inner body, inner senses, inner organs, but more—the Spirit-Being, the Pure Intelligence, who is the controller, the educator and the guide of those invisible senses and organs and of their visible coverings. And when he comes upon this great truth, he discards immediately every kind of outer aid in the gathering of knowledge. He finds within himself the very source of all wisdom and intelligence. He sees that relying on the Spirit-Being within him, the Inner Divinity, he can learn facts and truths about nature more expeditiously and more accurately.

The language of the Spirit is Intuition, and the incarnated Soul learning that language acquires knowledge which is thorough, infallible and quickly gathered. This process of gathering knowledge is also known as Mysticism. There is no vital difference

between a Mystic and an Occultist. Both rely on their Spirit-Power, and by its aid purify and control the invisible senses and organs and then impress upon them the inner knowledge enshrined in the Divinity within. One striking thing about the findings, about the detailed facts of knowledge gathered by Mystic after Mystic, or Occultist after Occultist, is that they all come upon the same facts, find the same truths. In this respect their findings are like those of the scientists: each scientist, by his own research and experiment, arrives at the same truth that his colleagues have found. So also, the body of knowledge that the Mystic or the Occultist has gathered together is along the same lines as the repeated findings of generations of his Predecessors.

The first facts of the science of Occultism need to be looked into. In the *Gita* and the Upanishads we often come across the term "three worlds," *Tri-loka*. Thus Krishna says that if He ceased to function, the three worlds would be destroyed. These three worlds are the physical, material, visible universe of which everybody knows; the inner, invisible universe, called the Astral World; and within that invisible astral, the Spiritual Universe, which in some schools of Hindu thought is called *Akasha*. This teaching about the three worlds is succinctly given by H. P. Blavatsky in her first work, *Isis Unveiled* (Items two and three of the Ten Items):

> Nature is triune: there is a visible, objective nature; an invisible, indwelling, energizing nature, the exact model of the other, and its vital principle; and, above these two, *spirit*, source of all forces, alone eternal, and indestructible. The lower two constantly change; the higher third does not.
>
> Man is also triune: he has his objective, physical body; his vitalizing astral body (or soul), the real man; and these two are brooded over and illuminated by the third—the sovereign, the immortal spirit. When the real man succeeds in merging himself with the latter, he becomes an immortal entity.

This truth needs to be understood from the point of view of the individual. We are familiar with the visible body and we also know that with the aid of our senses (*Jnana-Indriyas*) and of our organs (*Karma-Indriyas*) we live and feel, speak and act. But there is

something else we know, or ought to know: there are manifestations of forces in and through the body which affect the health of the body. Thus fear shakes or paralyses the body, love produces a glow, anger is maddening, quiet thought is uplifting, and so on. It is no use saying fear is an emotion, or love is a feeling. What are feelings and emotions if not forces? Modern science offers various explanations about feelings and emotions, but they are only theories. None of them explains all the phenomena. Ancient Hindu Psychology and modern Theosophy offer a complete and satisfactory explanation.

It is this, that within our body there is another organism, the Astral Body, called by various names in Sanskrit: *Sukshma Upadhi* (the subtle basis or foundation of the physical, visible body); *Linga Sharira* (the design body round which the material body is shaped and moulded); *Pranamaya Kosha* (the sheath of vitality or energy which keeps the visible body alive). It is by that astral organism that we live and function; it is through it that we feel and think; from it comes the impetus to speak and to act. This Astral Body has the real senses and organs; in it *Prana*, the Life-Energy, circulates. But at the present hour those inner senses and organs have become dependent on the outer senses and organs. Outer impressions have so taken hold of these astral senses and organs that the latter have, so to speak, lost their original power to initiate action and to control the visible, physical body and its life-activities.

Because modern knowledge does not take into account the Astral Body and the Astral World, it rejects also the Spirit in man and the Spiritual Universe. The whole emphasis is therefore laid on our physical brain and physical senses; our education is confined to making us fit for the struggles of existence in a single life, and the very nature of the human Soul and the human Spirit are grossly misunderstood. Theosophy, on the other hand, emphasizes that man is a Spirit-Being who possesses the living astral organism, and that the training of the real astral senses and organs is essential for harmonious existence even in the physical world. The order of education becomes, so to speak, reversed in Theosophy: We advocate finding the God within, the Master or Guru within, and by his

divine guidance the culture of the inner astral organism has to be undertaken; and thus the brain has to be educated to face the outside universe from which it receives a myriad impressions.

At this juncture, we might mention a fundamental difference between the method of *Raja-Yogis* or true Occultists and Mystics, and that of *Hatha-Yogis*, pseudo-occultists and pseudo-mystics. The *Raja-Yogis* begin with the development of the highest spiritual nature, and with that culture at their command they work on their inner astral organism, and finally handle the physical body. The pseudo-occultists immediately begin to develop the astral senses and organs, to acquire what is named the lower *siddhis*—psychic powers and abnormal faculties—and invariably go astray. Without the spiritual basis, astral development is highly dangerous. Following it, people enter the path of Mediumship which goes in the direction opposite to the path of Adeptship. So the first step should be cultivation of the spiritual nature, which cleanses and prepares our astral nature for right development. Physical and bodily practices follow *naturally*, as a matter of course, because inner development has been taking place. Everything in life, for the true student of Theosophy, proceeds from within the world of Spirit to the world of astral organism; from within the astral sensorium to the visible physical body. Within the physical senses, organs, nerves and brain, is the astral sensorium which Mr. Judge calls the Personal Man, and within the latter is the Real Man or Spirit-Being.

All events in our lives, our every word and every action, has its occult roots and occult effects. Much misery ensues because of our ignorance of this stupendous fact. Keeping this in mind, let us make some practical applications and learn to use Theosophy every day and every hour of the day.

People instinctively feel that there is an invisible world, and it is logical to deduce that there are also the invisible denizens of that world. But this human instinct, which is a right instinct, is not inquired into by most people. One reason is that their respective religious beliefs offer notions which they accept as true. This is a source of religious differences between people. Thus, Roman Catholicism calls its many angels and archangels good, but names

the gods of other creeds as the progeny of the devil; and so on. Again, so-called educated people accept scientific theories and pooh-pooh the very existence of the invisible world and its intelligences. Theosophy demolishes both these falsehoods. It teaches that the invisible is real, and that invisible it divides, as we saw, into two compartments: (1) the lower astral or psychic world, and (2) the Divine Astral or Akashic and Spiritual world. Nay, it goes further and gives us details of the sub-divisions of this dual invisible universe. Again, Theosophy speaks of the different classes of invisible beings—from soulless spooks to embodied *Nirmanakayas*. We shall confine ourselves to the simple division: there are sub-human invisible intelligences and super-human invisible intelligences. And among both these there are those that are beneficent and those that are maleficent to us all. Good and evil spirits or powers are not related to different religions, but to Nature as a whole, and just as there are good and bad Christians, good and bad Hindus, so are there good and bad invisible powers everywhere. Some among those who, abandoning religion, accept scientific theories, have been forced to recognize the existence of the invisible; their inner, instinctual feeling has carried them into what is called spiritism and psychical research. But there too only beliefs are encountered, not knowledge.

People go to spiritualistic séances to satisfy their craving for the invisible. Just as some get satisfaction by going to church or temple and praying to an invisible, unknown god or gods, so there are those who obtain solace by hearing a voice or getting a message through a medium. Both are groping in the darkness of ignorance. But, besides those who blindly accept religious dogmas, or as blindly swallow scientific dogmas, or again act blindly according to the messages received through mediums, we have another class—those who discard all these and adopt what may be called the religion of self-expression. They too act without any basis of knowledge.

Just as the *Hatha Yogis* rely on their psychic nature, while *Raja-Yogis* discard it to go to the highest or spiritual nature, so also we find that in our civilization there are schools of thought which

advocate the discarding of the visible religion and the adopting of the invisible religion. But there is danger in that position, against which Theosophy warns. The philosophy of the *Hatha Yogi* is more dangerous than the philosophy of the materialist. It is good that religious orthodoxy be broken and that we think and reason for ourselves, but to think and reason we must possess the right basis of knowledge. One who breaks with social conventions and religious creeds is apt to adopt the religion of sense-life. When we hear, "Be free to feel and think as you please; do not be afraid to express yourself," it might sound great, but Theosophy says there is grave danger lurking in such thought. It is necessary that we break the fetters of crass orthodoxy and social superstitions, but in doing so we must rise higher, not sink lower. The way out of religious orthodoxy is not to embrace Materialism, but to turn to Theosophy, to Spirituality, to Mysticism or Occultism. By all means let us leave off the false religious life, but let us replace it with the spiritual life rooted in the experience and wisdom of true *Raja Yogis*, true *Rishis*, great Sages and Masters. So let us avoid any and every road that is not rooted in tangible knowledge. In adopting any practice, making any experiment, or following any ritual, let us seek knowledge—knowledge that enlightens the mind, brings conviction, and prepares us to practise in safety as well as in surety.

What does Theosophy teach in reference to the invisible worlds and the invisible powers? This—the lower or psychic invisible, and the higher or spiritual invisible, both affect every man, woman and child. By what method does the invisible touch us? By the method of consubstantiality. In each of us there is an invisible universe that is twofold; we call it our nature—good nature, evil nature. By our good qualities we attract to ourselves good and beneficent entities and powers; on the other hand, by our evil nature we attract evil powers. This attraction of good and evil powers in Nature is mainly done by our thoughts. The power of thought attracts and brings to the mind invisible entities which we call elementals—in Sanskrit, *devatas*. Theosophy differentiates between *devas* and *devatas*. *Devatas* are sub-human, non-self-conscious, and we absorb them into our own constitution by the power of thought. Love and hate

are the two great root-forces working in us; behind all our thoughts, these two are ever lurking. We are impelled and compelled by our desires and longings; our love and hate stir our mind, and then we think, and according to that thought come rushing to us the *devatas* or elementals which then strengthen our love or hate. The presence or absence of these *devatas* or elementals produces good or bad moods; and when by our repeated thinking we make those moods permanent, we call them virtues or vices. Moods of petty jealousies continually indulged in bring to us the vice of jealousy; many moods of small irritations develop the vice of anger; and so on. Thus, our love and hate, as the basis of our thought, build, through the agency of the *devatas*, our character.

Next, just as moods repeated settle down into a virtue or a vice, so this virtue or that vice settling down into our constitution produces good or bad health. Bad moods become vices, vices become physical diseases. Jealously eats away human nature, and when persisted in, produces bodily diseases. Cancer, leprosy and so forth are but materialized vices. There are germs of disease, but *we* create within ourselves these germs—by housing those elementals. We attract and harbour those *devatas* in us and they follow their own line of life and produce one or other kind of disease.

So we have within us a twofold invisible universe: the lower or psychic, and the higher or spiritual. In the lower nature are love and hate, *raga-dvesha*; in the higher is Wisdom-Bliss, *Jnana-Ananda*. From personal likes and loves arise personal dislikes and hates: it is the personal lower who gets jealous, the personal philanthropist who is elated when praised and depressed when not praised. So from personal loves grow personal hates; this is the activity of the lower nature. From impersonal Wisdom comes impersonal Bliss. *Raga*, desire-love, is the mother of *dvesha*, anger-hate, while *Jnana* is the mother of *Ananda*. Let us not swing between loves and hates, but go to Wisdom which is Bliss. Impersonal Wisdom is also Immortal Love, the first of the Divine Virtues, or *Paramitas*—*Dana*, divine charity and love immortal. The Path of Real Occultism, starting in the higher and spiritual part of the invisible universe, has as its first seven steps the seven *Paramitas* or Virtues

as given in *The Voice of the Silence*.

Theosophy presents to us the facts of the great science of Occultism, *Atma-Vidya*, reiterating the Wisdom of those *Atma-Jnanis,* those Divine Magicians, who sent H.P.B. into our world. The Great Ones are Living Souls in the Occult World of Light Spiritual. Not of any one race or religion, They possess Wisdom which is universal, and serve impersonally the whole of the human race. Let us come out from the world of separative creeds, clashing beliefs, conflicting religions, into the unifying Religion of Wisdom whose Teachers are Immortal Men.

THE profoundest and most transcendental speculations of the ancient metaphysicians of India and other countries, are all based on that great Buddhistic and Brahmanical principle underlying the whole of their religious metaphysics—*illusion* of the senses. Everything that is finite is illusion, all that which is eternal and infinite is reality. Form, colour, that which we hear and feel, or see with our mortal eyes, exists only so far as it can be conveyed to each of us through our senses. The universe for a man born blind does not exist in either form or colour, but it exists in its *privation* (in the Aristotelean sense), and is a reality for the spiritual senses of the blind man. We all live under the powerful dominion of phantasy. Alone the highest and invisible *originals* emanated from the thought of the Unknown are real and permanent beings, forms, and ideas; on earth, we see but their reflections, more or less correct, and ever dependent on the physical and mental organization of the person who beholds them.

—*Isis Unveiled,* II, 157-58

LETTERS TO A STUDENT
IV

[Reprinted from *The Pacific Theosophist*, September 1893.]

DEAR SIR AND COMRADE:

By your favour of May 13th, I am sorry to see that you have met with a reverse which must naturally try your patience.

We are *all* channels through which Ishwara flows, and if we live up to the light we have, no more is asked.

Many are the Karmic tests, and one lesson we have to learn, and a hard one, is that "They also serve who only stand and wait." While waiting we can purify the mind and heart from error; such purification alone will make us useful to our fellow men.

I think we often miss little things nearby which we might do, by looking further off for great things which the law has not yet set as tasks for us.

"Pure devotion if persistent will always bring knowledge in time" as I understand the matter. But a certain amount of Karma must first be exhausted. "Great is the slayer of desire." Here "great" is used in the sense of real greatness. Only the selfless man is truly great, and hence truly useful. "Sow with seeds of merit, etc." These seeds are elsewhere shown to be patience, submission to the law and so on. *No* Karmic law condemns us to inability to sow.

We have brought about our own present ignorance and helplessness, but we can still sow seeds of patience, and of right thought, and it is only by accepting whatever comes as best for us at that time that we can progress in the least. Instead, then, of bewailing our present locked-up condition, we should take it as a thing to be borne with, studied, understood and even used. I say this for myself as much as for you, for like all, I too am in darkness and long to serve more than ignorance and circumstance now permit. The Buddhi principle lives on a plane beyond our knowledge; I mean our mere brain knowledge. Man can "break the walls" and "invite its action," and by will-power it is done.

But that man must be far more selfless than we are; his consciousness must centre *within*, so that he may know his own

powers. None of us are fit yet for more than an intellectual appreciation of these things and, could we awaken the power, it might kill the body through an ignorant misdirection of it. The really selfless man is he in whom the sense of personality is really killed, and not one who says in sentiment or heart, "I am one with all." The selfless man has another consciousness from ours. These things are *away beyond* as yet; but we may hear them and meditate on them, and await our turn. The real "Will Power" meant is a force we do not yet develop in us.

We may think we open our hearts to the divine Power, but we mistake; we do so in sentiment only; we have not done so in actuality until the sense of personality can be paralysed in both bodies; until then, our heart, in fact, clings to egoism and personality. To feel an emotion is *not* to be that thing, its real self. The Eternal is all-powerful. It is we who are weak.

We must win the Divine for ourselves, each into his own centre, but it helps. It does not do all because to make it truly our own we must work towards it; and in reality, we go to it, and then it does all. Our *whole* being does *not* wish to commune with the Higher Self. If it did, the thing were done, the bond established. It is precisely because parts of our nature yet to be conquered do not wish for it, but incline to material life, that the communion is not established. We have our moments of mental wish for it, but that does not suffice.

We need to conquer every organ, every cell, and fill each with that wish. Brother, you underrate the task. It is one of ages. We cannot look for much now, but we can learn patience and we can work for the rest. Such work can be done by study.

I know well the condition you speak of "than which death is more desirable." I have no panacea for it; I seek one. I find help only in stern disregard of all my lower mind says, and in going on as best I can. The best is lame enough. If the soul within desired to quit material life we should die in this body at once. So it is only the lower mind which desires it. That mind each must fight. Our own thoughts are our worst foes.

We have to learn not to accept our mind as judge and umpire, but

to look aloft to intuitive faith. Mind suggests all these doubts and fears. We want silence then with the cry, "all's well." You look for too great results, and so you despond. Well, I have done it too.

Self-control is the first great step. It is the only step, for, when it is complete, we know all.

I also think the "Voice" more to the point, as we at present stand, and its teachings of submission and devotion are for all.

Not so easy either, and, till we learn them, progress is barred. We have to comply with inner conditions before we can do much with self.

I think the word "lost" in relation to him who "knows not the hidden powers of self" refers to that disciple who should undertake to awake their forces without knowledge and due preparation of and for them. I mean they can destroy the body of the rash seeker who knows not how to guide them and has not purified his whole heart. That is—it means this to *my* mind. Disinterested workers are much needed always. Bear patiently, as you have, with the present silence. The Light will shine again. Our doubts, our sad hearts, obscure it, and then we wonder it does not shine; above us, it *is*, in endless splendour. All your efforts and your aspirations are known, are registered and must prevail, and our unseen comrades are ever near us with hearts full of sympathy and courage.

Thanking you always for your confidence and in belief that you will soon find a way station of more peace, I am,

Fraternally yours,

JASPER NIEMAND

THERE can be no possible conflict between the teachings of occult and so-called exact Science, where the conclusions of the latter are grounded on a substratum of unassailable fact.

—*The Secret Doctrine*, I, 477

CATACLYSMS—A CLEANSING PROCESS

IT is a well-known fact that the geography of the earth has undergone many changes through the ages. This cannot but remind us of the references in Theosophical literature to the ending of cycles in humanity's history, entailing cataclysms in portions of the globe. We have been told that the Americas will be the home of the coming new race and that Europe is on the eve of a cataclysm. Changes do not take place overnight, but for ages a re-sorting of peoples takes place, and "newer" lands become peopled.

A few references culled from our books on the various deluges and on the shifting of continents may be of use, for we are told that floods or cataclysms take place at the end of every race and the beginning of a new race, and also that every sub-race is preceded by some kind of a cataclysm. We have therefore cataclysms of different magnitudes. H.P.B. calls them "a cleansing process."

The major deluges are, first, the Universal Deluge or Cosmic Flood:

> The first Cosmic Flood refers to primordial creation, or the formation of Heaven and the Earths; in which case Chaos and the Great Deep stand for the "Flood," and the Moon for the "Mother," from whom proceed all the life-germs. (*S.D.*, II,139)

This obviously refers to the Sidereal or Cosmic Flood "before the so-called creation," "when there is no God or mortal yet on Earth" (*S.D.*, II, 146). Then came "the Great Flood of Matter on Earth," and "real watery deluges." There was one "great flood" at the end of the First Race—"at the end of the Satya Yuga, the 'age of Truth,' when the *Second* Root Race...made its primeval appearance." (*S.D.*, II, 146)

Then nearer our time, we have the semi-universal deluge during the first glacial period, about 850,000 years ago, 200,000 years after the commencement of our Fifth Aryan Race, 1,000,000 years ago. This has been recorded in all traditions. It was "attributed by geologists and astronomers to 'an extreme eccentricity of the Earth's orbit,' and...the Secret Doctrine attributes it to the same source, but with the addition of another factor, the shifting of the

Earth's axis." (*S.D.*, II, 144-5)

Then comes the deluge to which the Bible refers. H.P.B. says:

> The deluge noticed in the *Bible*, in one of the *Brahmanas*, and in the Berosus *Fragment*, relates to the partial flood which, about 10,000 years B.C., according to Bunsen, and according to the Brahmanical computations of the Zodiac, also changed the whole face of Central Asia. (*Isis Unveiled*, II, 426)

She says that this could not have been a universal deluge, for,

> if such a *universal* cataclysm had ever taken place within man's memory, some of the monuments of the Egyptians, of which many are of such a tremendous antiquity, would have recorded that occurrence....But, till now [1877], there has not been found the remotest allusion to such a calamity....On the other hand the Chaldeans preserved the tradition, as we find Berosus testifying to it, and the ancient Hindus possess the legend.....Now, there is but one explanation of the extraordinary fact that of two contemporary and civilized nations like Egypt and Chaldea, one has preserved no tradition of it whatever, although it was the most directly interested in the occurrence—if we credit the *Bible*—and the other has....The Babylonians and the Chaldeans might have learned of it from their mysterious guests, christened by some Assyriologists Akkadians, or what is still more probable they, themselves, perhaps, were the descendants of those who had dwelt in the submerged localities. The Jews had the tale from the latter as they had everything else; the Brahmans may have recorded the traditions of the lands which they first invaded, and had perhaps inhabited before they possessed themselves of the Punjab. But the Egyptians, whose first settlers had evidently come from Southern India, had less reason to record the cataclysm, since it had perhaps never affected them except indirectly, as the flood was limited to Central Asia. (*Ibid.*, II, 425-6)

Nevertheless the story in the Bible has obviously been adapted from the account of the semi-universal deluge which took place at the beginning of the First Race, 850,000 years ago. This is recorded as tradition in the Hindu books—"in the *Mahabharata*, the *Puranas*, and still earlier in the *Satapatha*, one of the latest

Brahmanas."

> It is more than probable that Moses, or whoever wrote for him, used these accounts as the basis of his own purposely disfigured allegory, adding to it moreover the Chaldean Berosian narrative. In *Mahabharata*, we recognize Nimrod under the name of *King Daytha*. The origin of the Grecian fable of the Titans scaling Olympus, and the other of the builders of the Tower of Babel who seek to reach heaven, is shown in the impious *Daytha*, who sends imprecations against heaven's thunder, and threatens to conquer heaven itself with his mighty warriors, thereby bringing upon humanity the wrath of Brahma. "The Lord then resolved," says the text, "to chastise his creatures with a terrible punishment which should serve as a warning to survivors, and to their descendants."
>
> *Vaivasvata* (who in the *Bible* becomes Noah) saves a little fish, which turns out to be an *avatar* of Vishnu. The fish warns that just man that the globe is about to be submerged, that all that inhabit it must perish, and orders him to construct a vessel in which he shall embark, with all his family. When the ship is ready, and *Vaivasvata* has shut up in it with his family *the seeds of plants and pairs of all animals*, and the rain begins to fall, a gigantic fish, armed with a horn, places itself at the head of the ark. The holy man, following its orders, attaches a cable to this horn, and the fish guides the ship safely through the raging elements. In the Hindu tradition the number of days during which the deluge lasted *agrees exactly with that of the Mosaic account*. When the elements were calmed, the fish landed the ark on the summit of the Himalayas. (*Isis Unveiled*, II, 425)

This story, H.P.B. tells us, "strikes the keynote, and yet it needs to be explained by the secret sense contained in the *Bhagavad-Gita*. It is the *prologue to the drama* of our (Fifth) Humanity" (*S.D.*, II, 139). She links up the fish with the *Dagon* of the Chaldean Xisuthrus, and tells us that the characters in the Hindu myths can be understood in their true significance only when each of these mythical personages bears, besides an astronomical significance, a spiritual or moral, and an anthropological or physical meaning. Vaivasvata Manu is a generic character. He is the " 'Root-Manu' on

Globe A in the First Round"; "the '*seed* of life' on Globe D in the Fourth Round," and the " 'Seed of Man' at the beginning of every Root Race in our Fifth Race especially." (*S.D.*, II. 146-7)

She also gives some explanations of the meaning of some of the symbols used. The Ark, she says,

> in which are preserved the germs of all living things necessary to repeople the earth, represents the survival of life, and the supremacy of spirit over matter, through the conflict of the opposing powers of nature. (*Isis Unveiled*, II, 444)

The water of the flood,

> when standing in the allegory for the symbolic "sea," Tamti, typifies the turbulent chaos, or matter, called "the great dragon." (*Ibid.*, II, 445)

The animals shut up in the ark "are the human passions. They typify certain ordeals of initiation." (*Ibid.*, II, 447)

Who was Noah?

> Nuah is Noah *floating on the waters,* in his ark; the latter being the emblem of the argha, or moon, the feminine principle; Noah is the "spirit" falling into matter. We find him as soon as he descends upon the earth, planting a vineyard, drinking of the wine, and getting drunk on it; *i.e.*, the pure spirit becoming intoxicated as soon as it is finally imprisoned in matter. (*Ibid.*, II, 423)
>
> ...since Vaivasvata Manu's Humanity appeared on this Earth, there have already been four such axial disturbances; when the old continents—save the first one—were sucked in by the oceans, other lands appeared, and huge mountain chains arose where there had been none before. The face of the Globe was completely changed each time; the *survival of the fittest* nations and races was secured through timely help; and the unfit ones—the failures—were disposed of by being swept off the earth. Such sorting and shifting does not happen between sunset and sunrise, as one may think, but requires several thousands of years before the new house is set in order.
>
> The *Sub*-races are subject to the same cleansing process, as also the side branchlets (the family-Races). (*S.D.*, II, 330)

Where are we now? That is unimportant. What is important is that we should extend our concept of time and space and realize a little the changing character of the very world in which we live, all due to great Nature's struggle towards perfection—a beneficent process, a progression, not a going back. Our place in the cycle depends on our growth, our efforts, our Karma. An intelligent interest brings us nearer to the point when we can consciously "help Nature and work on with her."

THE *Gita* teaches that happiness results from the ideal of *nishkama karma*, action undertaken by a human being without desire for reward. The popular misconception is that this is a legitimation of inertial performance that leaves little scope for achievement or a striving after perfection. Such is not, however, the case: the ideal of *nishkama karma* does not preclude purposiveness or the attainment of an objective. What it does assert is that the goal must not be turned into a psychological idol, an object of desire so strong that its non-attainment would create fierce negative energies of rage and frustration.

Worse, the thought of the fruit might become so real as to drain away the energy of the seeker's purpose: Gandhi, who pondered over the *Gita* throughout his life, held that if one kept thinking of the fruit, one would cease to pay attention to the acting out of the action itself. It is as an antidote to these perils that the *Gita* preaches its legendary equanimity in the face of the vicissitudes of life: in chapter 12, shloka 18, Krishna describes the perfect individual as one whose "love is the same for his enemies or his friends, whose soul is the same in honour or disgrace, who is beyond heat or cold or pleasure or pain, who is free from the chains of attachment."

—P. D. SHASTRI

SELF—PERSONAL, EGOIC, UNIVERSAL

DISCIPLINE is a hated word today, for it is understood to imply infringement upon one's self-determination and self-expression. And indeed it is so if it is imposed from without; but imposed from within, as *self*-discipline, it gives the only *self*-expression possible. To understand this problem, we need a totally new approach to it—new, that is to say, to humanity at this stage of its evolution. Perhaps defining of terms will help to remove some misconceptions and give us a new viewpoint.

The word "discipline" is stated in the dictionary to mean "the treatment suited to a disciple or learner; education; training; drill." The second meaning is: "subjection to rule; control; habit of obedience." The third meaning is: "correction; chastisement by way of correction and training; hence, training through suffering." These three meanings together will probably give us a good idea of what the word really implies. Once we understand life as a school, the need for education becomes apparent. To allow oneself to be educated implies subjection to rule and control. In fact we must do our share and in order to get anything we must obey the rules for getting.

One of the meanings of "determination," according to the dictionary, is "the quality of mind which reaches definite conclusions; decision; resoluteness." Another meaning is "impulsion." "Self-determined" means "determined by itself." "Self-dependent" means "self-reliant."

"Expression" is the "act or product of pressing out."

What of the word "self"? H.P.B. used three styles of printing for this word, thus giving it three different implications. When the word is written in lower-case letters (self), it refers to the lower self, the self we know, the personal man, the man of ordinary life. When it is written with a capital "S" (Self), it stands for the Ego or Inner Man, the Soul, the Higher Manas (whose representative, the lower Manas, is still Manas in character and nature). When the word is written in all capitals (SELF), the Universal SELF is meant.

We can therefore see that the words self-discipline, self-deter-

mination and self-expression can imply either the animal-human discipline, determination and expression, or the Egoic, Manasic discipline, determination and expression, or universal law and order, the characteristic of the whole manifestation—in terms of qualities, Natural Law and Compassion. Natural Law is the outer expression of Compassion, for it gives the right proportion to all things. The goal of human evolution is to become COMPASSION ABSOLUTE, so that the right proportion can be given to all things, and in order to attain this, we have first to find out the laws and realize that we have to become the impersonal operators of those laws.

Our first task is on ourselves, where we are at any given moment, and the first question we should ask ourselves is, "Which self is predominant in self-expression, which self do I want to express, and which self expresses itself before I am aware of it, bringing pain and sorrow to awake me after the event? What also is that in me which recognizes that that self-expression was wrong, unlawful, selfish, grasping, disturbing, ignorant?" If recognition dawns on us, it is a step forward in living rightly; but from the real point of view what is needed is not the cultivation of the good man but of the egoic man, and here we need the recognition of the Self.

We can recognize the existence of this Self when we recognize the law of reincarnation, repeated existences of the Soul or Ego, and, recognizing the goal of life to be the expression of the Ego, we learn the first necessary lesson: life is for the Ego, not for the animal-human personality.

It is this fundamental viewpoint that revolutionizes our life. Once accepted, all actions, feelings and thoughts are seen from the point of view of the soul's experience. If we can grasp that it is also the permanent experience, we can see that the effort is worth while.

It is through the Self that we begin to recognize the reality of the SELF, and that comes by study, by aspiration and by the effort to control by the Higher the lower. Only the recognition, at least in principle, that the SELF is the highest, most radiant and sublime of all, whose reflection we can glimpse in the most perfect and inspiring of all Nature's gifts of beauty, in the majesty of perfect

Law and Justice, in the lives of compassion and sacrifice of the Great Ones, can give us the necessary root-basis for all effort. Seeing this, and glimpsing the truth pointed out by Theosophy, that the Self is capable of reflecting this Highest in and through the matter of the lower personal man, life becomes an interesting phenomenon. Interesting, but also difficult, for now begins the struggle between the self-determination and self-expression of the animal and the effort to express and assert the Self. We must aim not at killing out but at educating the lower self. We must educate men not to fight, not to be angry, not to cheat, or to steal, or commit adultery, etc., and we must educate the animal-man in us not to do these things. Also we must teach the animal-man that henceforth he is to behave like a horse that has been broken in, and to derive pleasure in serving his master.

This is especially important when dealing with children. Good bodily habits are built in the young child by constantly and consistently providing the right conditions. But when the time comes for the Manas to control the growing child, parents and teachers forget that he needs help to learn how to control his own nature and how to educate it to obey his higher will. Effort must be made by parents and teachers to help the child to get this duality of himself firmly in mind, and the purpose of life should be explained. When we have a clearer grasp of the relationship between the Self and the SELF, we can help the young (as well as ourselves) to see that the Self is but a part of the One SELF, just as the animal-human man is a part of the whole of manifestation, and, as such, has a duty towards the other aspects of manifestation. As the U.L.T. Declaration points out, it is only an increasing knowledge of the SELF that will enable men to practise true Brotherhood.

Discipline has to be seen as both imposed from without by Natural Law—as by fire which says, "keep away or you will be hurt"—and from within as we learn that indiscipline leads to hurt, now or in the future. Discipline by the Self of the self, through the recognition that Law must be obeyed or danger results, and also that it is a means to the evolution of the Self, brings its own satisfaction. Discipline is education; it is correction; it is a preventive from

danger; it is obedience to Universal Law. We are taught to review our day and see which self has been expressing itself. In moments of meditation or of aspiration, of sympathy and longing, we may get glimpses of the Higher; in moments of thought of who and what we are, we can sense a part of ourselves other than the personal; in moments of anger or of grief, we can see in their stark nakedness some of the things we wish we were not! But we try again.

The most important thing to keep in mind is the unity of the One, the devotion to Krishna, the world of the Great Brothers, and the creation of such an atmosphere that no man will hurt his brother, but all join in the common task of SELF-expression and SELF-determination through working with LAW. Then will conflict cease in the lower self, and among the lower selves.

THOSE who still believe in the rib-and-apple fable and in the rebellious angel "Satan," believe, as a matter of course, in a personal Devil—as a contrast in a dualistic religion—to a personal God. We, Theosophists of the Eastern school, believe in neither. Yet we go, perhaps, further still than the Biblical dead letter. For we say that while as *extra-cosmic* Entities there is neither god nor devil, that both exist, nevertheless. And we add that both dwell on earth in man, being in truth, *the very man himself*, who is, as a physical being, the devil, the true vehicle of *evil*, and as a spiritual entity—god, or *good*. Hence, to say to mankind, "thou hast the devil," is to utter as metaphysical a truth as when saying to all its men, "Know ye not that god dwelleth in you?" Both statements are true. But, we are at the turning point of the great social cycle, and it is the former fact which has the upper hand at present....Now we rarely find aspirations toward the eternal ideal in the human heart, but instead of it every thought tending toward the one central idea of our century, the great "I," *self* being for each the one mighty centre around which the whole Universe is made to revolve and turn.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

SAYINGS OF JESUS

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

[This article by Mr. Judge appeared in *The Theosophical Forum*, December 1937, with an introductory note which reads: "The following, held in the archives of the Theosophical Society, Point Loma, is a copy of an original article, or what appear rather to be hastily written notes, in the handwriting throughout of William Q. Judge, hitherto, we believe, unpublished."—EDS.]

THE references herein are taken from *St. Matthew* in the revised version. In Chap. 4 account is given of Jesus being led into the wilderness to be tempted of "the devil," which means, theosophically, the trials of the disciple in the world or wilderness of his own nature.

The tempter suggests first that bread be made out of stones after the long fast. But Jesus replied:

"It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

After a period of prayer, or aspiration, the mystics in all ages had first to resist the temptation to at once satisfy immediate bodily wants, and then on triumphing they receive instruction and benefit from "God" who is the Higher Self. The Higher Self is the god they all, including Jesus, aspired to and spoke of as *God* and *Father*. Usually the clash and roar of the lower nature prevents the words or "voice" of that Father from being heard. Shakespeare knew the value of fasting to release the inner, for he said that when the bodily encasement was reduced the inner self came forth more easily. And here Jesus is only repeating what all the schools of real occultism teach, that is, that the real man has his own appropriate food, or the communion with the Monad which is not perfectly conscious on this plane, but must be sought for in its own proper habitation.

Then the "devil" took him to a high place, suggesting that he throw himself down and be saved by the angels, to which Jesus replied:

"Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."

This could not mean that he adjured Satan not to tempt him—his God—but rather that it was neither common sense nor the act of an occultist to show his powers for no end but vanity. This is one of the rules of the Lodge, that if you have occult power you shall not use it except for the benefit of others.

The Sermon on the Mount is of high importance theosophically. If taken literally, it is a string of meaningless promises which are broken every day, but adding Karma and Reincarnation they are the old declarations of all great teachers and holy books prior to the alleged time of Jesus.

The first beatitude, that the poor in spirit will have heaven, is that which was always taught as the result of humility. For only when the personal self is thoroughly eliminated, and the idea of separateness is destroyed by that of universal brotherhood, does the illumination from within, desired by all earnest students, come to one. Many neglect this injunction, being carried away by scientific phrases or having personal ends. One need not be a "Christian" to see and accept this injunction of Jesus, since it was only repeated as of old by him; carried on, as Confucius did his ideas.

THE esoteric saviour is no *man*, but the *divine principle* in every human being. What is needed is a knowledge of the Path that leads to Him or It. The foolish look for a "Man"; the wise look for a "Message." Few know the Messenger when He comes, but it is possible for many to know a true Message by putting it to every conceivable test. The "Messiah" has come and gone; but He has left the "Comforter"—His Message. He will return, but not for several generations of men. It is possible for men to get at the truth of these things if they will take the trouble to make the search in all sincerity.

—ROBERT CROSBIE

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

For decades, anthropologists have speculated as to when and why man got his erect posture. Till lately, it was believed that the shift from life in the forest to life in the more open African savanna set the ape apart by forcing it onto two legs. Bipedalism, it is argued, allowed hominids to see over tall savanna grass, perhaps, or escape predators, or walk more efficiently over long distances; besides, it freed the hands to make tools for hunting or gathering plants. In the July 1996 issue of *Discover*, James Shreeve, author of *The Neanderthal Enigma*, writes of recently uncovered evidence which strikes a blow to the hypothesis linking environment to human evolution:

> Now that familiar stage set has come crashing down under the weight of a spectacular crop of new hominid fossils from Africa, combined with revelations about the environment of our earliest ancestors. The classic savanna hypothesis is clearly wrong, and while some still argue that open grasslands played some role in the origins of bipedalism, a growing number of researchers are beginning to think the once unthinkable: the savanna may have had little or nothing to do with the origins of bipedalism.

Although the hypothesis that bipedalism evolved as an adaptation to the savanna has been brought down, anthropologists admit that they do not have enough evidence to build up a new theory in its place. "I don't really know why we became bipedal...it's such an unusual thing," says Andrew Hill of Yale. "We're back to square one," says Phillip Tobias, a distinguished paleoanthropologist at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg.

Anthropologists have still a long way to go before they come to the position taken by the Secret Doctrine on the subject of human evolution. Far from a four-legged ape making a shift to bipedalism, the esoteric teaching is that "we have 'bipeds,' or men, created before the 'quadrupeds'" (*S.D.*, II, 163). Further, "that an animal should be a quadruped or a biped is something not depending on the necessities of organization, or instinct, or intelligence" (*Ibid.*, I,

607-8 fn.). Man is not a superior genus of animal, nor is he a product merely of natural adaptations. His fashioners or ancestors were different classes of Creative Powers, each of which endowed him with what it had to give. Of the two chief classes, the one built his external form; the other endowed him with the light of Manas and made him a self-conscious, thinking being. It is this latter event, which occurred 18 million years ago, and not just our erect posture, that sets us apart from the other species. It stands to reason that no amount of probing into fossil records will bring anthropologists nearer to an understanding of man's real origin and evolution.

A special report in the October 28 issue of *Time* magazine (Asia edition) deals with our endangered oceans. In the opening essay, marine biologist Sylvia A. Earle regrets that, as with life on the Earth's surface, so with life in the oceans, man is undermining the healthy functioning of ecosystems fine-tuned for success over thousands of millenniums. We know more about the moon and Mars than we do about what lies beneath the surface of the seas—how many marine species there are in remote areas, how they live, and what values they may have to humankind—yet we keep on destroying this wellspring of life before we even know what we are losing. The consequences of our folly can indeed be grim:

> The sea shapes the character of this planet, governs weather and climate, stabilizes temperature, yields to the atmosphere the moisture that falls back on the land, replenishing Earth's fresh water to rivers, lakes, streams—and us. Every breath we take is possible because of the life-filled, life-giving sea; oxygen is generated there, carbon dioxide absorbed. Both in terms of the sheer mass of living things and genetic diversity, that's where the action is. Rain forests and other terrestrial systems are important too, of course, but without the living ocean there would be no life on land. Most of Earth's living space, the biosphere, is ocean—about 97%. And not so coincidentally, 97% of Earth's water is ocean....
>
> The sea is Earth's life-support system. The services pro-

vided are so fundamental that most of us who live here tend to take them for granted. In the past century, without much thought about the consequences, we have removed billions of tons of living creatures from the sea and added to it billions of tons of toxic substances. Fish, whales, shrimp, clams and other living things are regarded as commodities, not as vital components of a living system upon which we are utterly dependent....

Curiously, no one really knows what the consequences will be of overfishing or ocean dumping, and incredibly, little is being done to find out. In recent years observations from ships, submersibles, satellites and spacecraft have yielded staggering discoveries: the existence of some 65,000 km of underwater mountain ranges; knowledge of plate tectonics and the grand earth processes that drive the shifting of continents; the presence of the largest concentration of volcanoes on earth; and the profoundly important links between ocean currents and climate, weather and periodic phases of global warming and cooling. Perhaps most stunning of all are those radically different deep-sea ecosystems that have stirred us to think in new ways about the origin of life....

We have the power to eliminate creatures from the sea as surely as we have eliminated creatures from the land, and with each loss the living fabric that makes the planet hospitable becomes weaker, less stable and more likely to evolve in new directions not to our liking.

We have the capacity to destroy the life that supports us—whether in the ocean or on land—but not the power to recreate it. Our best hope lies in becoming co-workers with all living things that comprise Nature. Nothing is too insignificant or useless in the economy of Nature, and when species are lost, it is man who is the ultimate loser.

Marine organisms could potentially provide, among other things, scores of unique, new pharmaceuticals. In a recent project, European researchers visited Mediterranean sites off the coasts of Italy, France and Spain to study marine life, and collected about 60

species of sponges, bacteria, etc., to analyse for potential applications in drug research. (*The Futurist*, November-December 1996)

The researchers discovered eight compounds that acted as enzyme inhibitors, six species that killed or inhibited the growth and multiplication of microbes, four that destroy cells in the same manner as anticancer drugs, and two that kill or inhibit the growth of fungi. Overall, the researchers say that more than 80 new pharmaceutical products have been isolated as a result of the project.

This is only the beginning. The seas hold infinite possibilities, still to be explored. Just as by the thoughtless destruction of forests we are exterminating several species of plants that might have potential uses as food or medicines, so by polluting the oceans and destroying marine life we are doing away with a most precious resource before we even understand it.

Archaeologists in Beijing have announced that a Buddhist scripture unearthed in northwest China is the earliest book in the world produced with lettering typefaces carved in wood. The scripture, discovered in a pagoda in the Ningxia Hui autonomous region, consists of nine parts, with a total of some 100,000 characters, written in the language of the western Xia dynasty. Traditional thinking has been that printing type made of wood was invented during the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368).The newly-discovered scripture has pushed back the origin of such printing methods by more than 100 years. Archaeology experts say that the discovery would contribute to the study of the history and technique of Chinese printing, especially typeface printing. (*The Sunday Times of India*, November 24)

According to *Isis Unveiled* (I, 513), this method of printing was known in China in far earlier times:

> The nineteenth century seems positively doomed to humiliating confessions. Feltre (Italy) erects a public statue "to *Panfilo Castaldi, the illustrious inventor of movable printing types*," and adds in its inscription the generous confession that Italy

renders to him "*this tribute of honour too long deferred.*" But no sooner is the statue placed, than the Feltreians are advised by Colonel Yule to "burn it *in honest lime.*" He proves that many a traveller beside Marco Polo had brought home from China movable wooden types and specimens of Chinese books, the entire text of which was printed with such wooden blocks. We have seen in several Thibetan lamaseries, where they have printing-offices, such blocks preserved as curiosities. They are known to be of the greatest antiquity, inasmuch as types were perfected, and the old ones abandoned contemporaneously with the earliest records of Buddhistic lamaism. Therefore, they must have existed in China before the Christian era.

Memory, of all the functions of the brain, has for long proved the most mysterious to scientists. Now that the *living* brain can be watched and studied, new concepts of how it stores memory, retrieves it at will, and checks and compares it, are emerging. In *The Sunday Review* supplement of *The Times of India*, November 24, 1996, Kalpana Deuskar reports what scientists are saying today:

> It's now certain that memories are formed when electrical impulses blaze new connections between nerve cells in the brain. When we meet a new person, for instance, the image of his face enters the brain through the optic nerve, arriving in the form of electrical impulses. The impulses die down within milliseconds, but the brain has the ability to recreate the pattern made by them. The more often the pattern is conjured up (by seeing or thinking of that person) the stronger the connections become. With use, the pattern may move from short-term memory into permanent storage, so you can recall the face even years later.
>
> That, of course, is a simple description. Every memory is made of many such patterns, some for sound, others for sight, smell or texture. So a vivid memory would set off thousands of electrical impulses in the brain, probably like a fireworks display! Some memory patterns overlap in the brain and one little reminder can bring down a flood of related memories.

> Different kinds of memories are stored in different parts of the brain—concrete facts in one area, physical habits and skills (like driving) at another location, language skills still elsewhere, while memories of fear lie close to the base of the brain.

The student of Theosophy might well ask of the scientist: "Is memory in the brain only?" That which we learn, realize and apply by practice *is* our most sure and permanent memory which is never lost. Every organ, as every cell, has a consciousness of its own kind, but the brain has a special importance. "In that mansion called the human body," H.P.B. wrote, "the brain is the front-door, and the only one which opens out into Space. Elsewhere, she remarks that "the human brain is simply the canal between two planes—the psycho-spiritual and the material" (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 25*, p. 5). It is in the brain that sense impressions, received as vibrations, are perceived by the mind as ideas. But the brain's function cannot be fully understood without recognizing that the mind in incarnation is dual. That through which the creative energy functions is quite distinct from the brain. Soul-wisdom or the Heart Doctrine is independent of brain-learning or the Eye Doctrine, as *The Voice of the Silence* teaches.

Attention is invited to the extracts from H.P.B.'s writings on the subject of memory, printed in THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT for September and October 1987.

Lack of moral values in business life, leading to malpractice and wrong conduct, is deplored by Akhilesh Tuteja in a prize-winning paper at a contest organized by the Association of Indian Management Schools (*Ascent*, November 7, 1996). There are hundreds of management schools in India, which churn out business graduates by the thousands every year. Tuteja urges that these institutions need to concentrate on the ethical and moral development of their students, and not just on curriculum and grading system.

> Ethics and morality [he states] consist not only in what people habitually do, but also in the reasons for their actions.

Hence, ethical behaviour cannot be precisely identified or measured....

According to Leavitt, students are vulnearable to influence....Indeed they are as much in need of security, of clear culture norms, as all of us, in new settings. If they are not shaped in the culture by the institute, other forces will shape them. Hence it is the moral burden of educators to shape the students' attitudes....

According to McFarland, professional schools of medicine, law, engineering, education and business have special obligations to develop the ethical and moral understanding essential for good practice in their fields. But universities have so far not distinguished themselves for teaching high standards of ethics....

Higher the ethics and morals of a manager developed at the bud, during his management education, better will be the overall development of the nation. We need to do much more to reinforce in our management education the orientation towards ethics, which translates into a positive, proactive orientation towards relationships with other people.

The general condition of human society in a particular cycle is often reflected in the state of health of the individuals making up that society. The following "vital statistics" give an inkling of what will be the world's top lifestyle-related health problems in the year 2020:

A recent study conducted by the World Health Organization and Harvard University's School of Public Health says demographic and lifestyle changes will cause more people, on average, to die from heart disease, lung cancer, HIV and traffic accidents than now do. The prevalence of tobacco use today will contribute to a projected 8.4 million deaths in 2020, compared with about 3 million in 1990. However, the study does provide some good news: proportionally, deadly ailments such as malnutrition, and infectious and parasitic diseases are expected to decline.